

Message Text

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15 S

ACTION NEA-12

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 EUR-25 ADP-00 PM-07 NSC-10 SS-15 RSC-01

CIAE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 DODE-00 EB-11 PRS-01 RSR-01

OMB-01 /105 W

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P R 150900Z JUL 73

FM USINT BAGHDAD

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 0457

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

USINT CAIRO

C O N F I D E N T I A L BAGHDAD 0403

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS IZ

SUBJ: POST-COUP ASSESSMENT

REF: BAGHDAD 0393, 0394

1. SUMMARY: EVENTS OF PAST WEEK APPEAR TO JUSTIFY CONCLUSION THAT POSITION OF BAKR AND SADDAM HUSSEIN IS STRONGER, BUT BAATH PARTY WEAKENED. PURGE UNDERWAY WITHIN PARTY AND PROBABLY SECURITY FORCES. ARMY APPARENTLY UNDER CONTROL. REGIME CONTINUING TO PURSUE HIGHLY NATIONALIST POLICIES AND INDICATES DESIRE FOR IMPROVED RELATIONS WITH WEST, PERHAPS EVEN U.S. END SUMMARY

2. SENTENCING OF ABDUL-KHALIQ AL-SAMMARIE TO LIFE IMPRISONMENT AND EXECUTION OF MOHAMMED FADHEL, MEMBER OF REGIONAL LEADERSHIP
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RESPONSIBLE FOR PARTY CONTROL OVER ARMY, SEEM TO HAVE RESULTED

IN UNCHALLENGED LEADERSHIP OF BAKR/SADDAM COMBINATION. MOHAMMED FADHEL NOT BELIEVED TO HAVE HAD PERSONAL FOLLOWING. SAMMARIE, HOWEVER, HAD FOLLOWING THROUGHOUT BAATH. HE DROVE OWN CAR, DRESSED SIMPLY, WAS CRITICAL OF BAATHISTS WHO WORE LONDON TAILORED SUITS (I.E. SADDAM) AND CONDEMNED THOSE WHO DEVIATED FROM PURE BAATHISM AS INTERPRETED BY HIMSELF. REAL EXTENT OF SAMMARIE'S INVOLVEMENT IN PLOT WILL PROBABLY NEVER BE KNOWN. ACCORDING TO ALGERIAN AMBASSADOR, "HUNDREDS OF ARRESTS" HAVE TAKEN PLACE AMONG PARTY MEMBERS CONNECTED WITH SAMMARIE. SHAKE UP IN SECURITY FORCES RESULTING IN ARRESTS, DISMISSALS, AND TRANSFERS. NO OTHER LEADERS YET DISCREDITED. LABOR LEADER MOHAMAD AYESH INTERROGATED, THEN RELEASED.

3. STATEMENT IN OFFICIAL RELEASE THAT PLOT BEGAN SIX MONTHS AGO PLACES IT IN CRUCIAL STAGE OF IPC NEGOTIATIONS. FRENCH AMBASSADOR BELIEVES THAT SAMMARIE'S OPEN OPPOSITION TO SADDAM DATES FROM THIS TIME. NEGOTIATORS HAD REACHED HIGHLY FAVORABLE AGREEMENT JUST PRIOR TO CHRISTMAS AND THEN GOI HAD INEXPLICABLY BACKED OFF. FRENCH AMBASSADOR HAD GONE TO SEE SADDAM AND THIS WAS ONLY MEETING HE HAD HAD IN WHICH SADDAM WAS UNSURE OF HIMSELF. SADDAM HAD SAID HE COULD NOT TAKE DECISION SINCE BAATH RULE WAS COLLEGIAL. SAMMARIE WAS SINGLED OUT AT THIS TIME AS ONLY BAATH LEADER WHO PUBLICLY OPPOSED PARTICIPATION AND AS PROBABLE LEADER OF "LEFTIST" ELEMENTS (BAGHDAD 0002 OF JAN 1).

4. SINCE COUP ATTEMPT REGIME HAS PURSUED STRONGLY NATIONALIST POLICIES OF RECENT MONTHS AND TAKEN OTHER MEASURES WHICH SEEM TO DEMONSTRATE THAT BAKR AND SADDAM IN FULL CONTROL. ALL RESTRICTIONS ON FOREIGN TRAVEL, WITH EXCEPTION OF IRAN, WERE REMOVED ON JULY 10. ON JULY 11 SADDAM RECEIVED CORRESPONDENTS OF NEW YORK TIMES, LE MONDE AND LONDON OBSERVER FOR OVER FOUR HOURS. HE INDICATED DESIRE FOR EARLY RAPPROCHEMENT WITH UK AND TO LESSER EXTENT WITH U.S. HE STRESSED THAT REGIME WOULD DEMOCRATIZE ITSELF TO ENSURE GREATER PARTICIPATION. AT END OF INTERVIEW, HE SPENT HOUR ASKING JOURNALISTS QUESTIONS ON SUCH TOPICS AS IRAQ'S IMAGE IN WEST. ON JULY 11 GOI SIGNED 20 MILLION DOLLAR CONTRACT WITH JAPANESE FIRM FOR CONSTRUCTION OF MICROWAVE NETWORK. PURCHASE OF EIGHT NEW A/C ANNOUNCED JULY 10 WHICH PRESUMABLY INCLUDING FIVE FIVEINGS VALUED AT 55 MILLION DOLLARS. VICE PRESIDENT OF INTER-CONTINENTAL HOTELS SPENT JULY 12-14 HERE AT INVITATION OF MINISTRY

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OF PLANNING, WHICH WANTS INTER-CONTINENTAL TO BUILD HOTEL IN BASRA.

5. ON JULY 8 MININT LTGEN SAADOUN GHAIKAN SENT CONFIDENTIAL MESSAGE TO BRITISH HOME SECRETARY REQUESTING THAT HE RECEIVE MEDICAL CARE IN UK FOR PARTIALLY PARALYZED ARM RESULTING FROM TWO BULLET WOUNDS HE RECEIVED DURING COUP ATTEMPT. BRITISH AGREED AND GHAIKAN WILL LEAVE FOR UK THIS WEEK WITH ENTOURAGE. IN ADDITION, WIFE AND CHILDREN OF PRESIDENT AL-BAKR ARE GOING TO UK ON HOLIDAY,

AND TWO SONS OF LATE MINDEF SHEHAB HAVE ALREADY RETURNED TO STUDIES THERE. DIRGEN OF RCC ABDUL JALIL ALSO VISITING UK.

6. ALTHOUGH RELATIONS WITH COMMUNIST STATES REMAIN CORRECT, COMMUNIST DIPLOMATS HAVE SHOWN SOME CONSTERNATION OVER DISAPPEARANCE OF SAMMARIE. COMMUNIST REPRESENTATION AT JULY 14-17 CELEBRATIONS SEEMS LOW LEVEL AND THEY ARE RECEIVING LITTLE ATTENTION IN PRESS. SOVIET REP EXPECTED TO BE R. RASHIDOV, CANDIDATE MEMBER OF POLITBURO FROM UZBEKISTAN, BUT AS OF JULY 15 NO DEL FROM USSR HAD APPEARED.

7. COMMENT: IF ABOVE TRENDS CONTINUE IT WILL BE IMPORTANT THAT WESTERN COUNTRIES TAKE ACTIONS TO SHOW THAT SUCH POLICIES ARE IN IRAQ'S BEST INTERESTS. FOR EXAMPLE, ALGERIAN AMBASSADOR BELIEVES THAT WHEN SUBSTANCE OF INTERVIEWS WITH WESTERN JOURNALISTS GETS BACK TO IRAQ SADDAM IS GOING TO BE BRANDED A "RIGHTIST". THUS HE WILL NEED SOME SUCCESSES TO STRENGTHEN HIS POSITION. DETENTE WITH IRAN, WHICH WOULD GIVE REGIME GREATER SENSE OF SECURITY AND MIGHT ENABLE IT TO RESOLVE KURDISH PROBLEM, IS OF PRIMORDIAL IMPORTANCE. IT MAY EVEN BE PREREQUISITE TO RAPPROCHEMENT WITH WEST SINCE IN ABSENCE OF DETENTE WITH IRAN, IT WOULD BE DIFFICULT FOR REGIME TO ANTAGONIZE FURTHER SOVIET UNION, WHICH IS STILL ITS MAJOR PROTECTOR AGAINST EXTERNAL THREAT.
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